

## SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HANSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

## TAX FREEDOM DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, it has been a long day. The Chamber is thinning out. Members are on their way back to their districts. But tomorrow is coming. Tomorrow, May 9, is Tax Freedom Day, the day that working Americans can finally begin to keep the money they earn rather than paying it to the Government in taxes.

The fact is the tax burden most Americans face has been increasing every year. I am pleased that Congress, through the balanced budget agreement reached with the President, is actively pursuing some relief in the areas of the family tax credit, capital gains, and estate tax relief.

The budget agreement provides for a total of \$135 billion in tax relief over the next 5 years. That is a big step. I hope this will be a first step on a longer road toward true tax relief, including real tax reform. Congress has to find ways to provide additional relief and give due consideration to alternatives to the current tax system, which is unfair and inefficient.

Mr. Speaker, dare we look forward to a day when the average American no longer spends more in total taxes than on food, clothing, and housing combined? We are spending more on taxes than we are spending on food, clothing, and housing for our families. Something is wrong.

Washington speaks of this beginning tax relief as Washington's generosity. I have a bulletin for taxpayers: It is not Washington's money, it is your money. Yes, most Americans agree we should pay some taxes; a safety net for the less fortunate, national defense, things like that we all understand. Most Americans also agree we are now taxed too much to support too much government.

But I think all Americans, every American, agrees that not every hard-earned dollar sent to Washington is well spent by Washington. There is waste and fraud and abuse and redundancy and patronage and other spending foolishness, and we all know it. So spend smarter and less, and tax smaller and fairer. That would be a very good wake-up call tomorrow morning across our land on Tax Freedom Day.

I wonder how many Americans, Mr. Speaker, remember back to New Year's Eve, December 31, 1996? I wonder how many Americans know that ever since then, every dollar earned by the average American worker has been taken for taxation by the Government. I wonder how many Americans are as disgusted by that fact as I am.

## PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating National Public Service Recognition Week. I spoke earlier tonight of teachers. This more general recognition week was established in 1986. It is a week of national effort to educate and inform Americans about the range and quality of services provided by our public employees on the Federal, State, and local level.

As part of the national recognition effort, this weekend down on the Mall there are scores of exhibits that allow everyone to explore and learn more about the important work our civil servants perform across the country. I encourage any who can to attend.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to have this opportunity to pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of hardworking civil servants across the country, many of whom devote their entire careers to serving others and strengthening this great Nation.

At the outset I would like to commend the efforts of my friend, the gentleman from Baltimore, MD, Mr. ELIJAH CUMMINGS, the new ranking member of the Subcommittee on Civil Service. I would also like to thank the members the Bipartisan Federal Government Task Force, which I cochair, for continuing to fight for the hard-working Federal employees.

Mr. Speaker, in describing our Nation's civil servants, President Clinton recently noted, and I quote, "Each day in schools and offices across the country, in hospitals, parks, museums, and on military installations, America's public employees dedicate their time, energy, and talent to create a brighter future for their fellow citizens and for our Nation."

I could not agree with the President more. Of course, I hold a special affinity for our Nation's Federal work force. I represent thousands of Federal employees and retirees. I have worked hard to protect and preserve their pay and benefits over the years. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to do so.

Last Friday, I joined President Clinton to announce the balanced budget deal at a press conference in Baltimore. While it is not the deal that I would have written, I am pleased that the final package will apparently not contain a delay in cost of living adjustments for Federal retirees or require

Federal employees to pay a higher percentage of the overall contribution to their health benefit package. I hope that ends up being in the agreement. We are working toward that end.

Over the last 20 years the Federal work force, Mr. Speaker, has lost an estimated \$220 billion in pay and benefits to which it was entitled under law existing in 1980.

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Let me repeat that for those who are listening. We have a budget deficit. The Federal work force has contributed mightily to solving that deficit by facing changes in law affecting their pay and benefits to the extent that they have received in pay and benefits \$220 billion less over the last 17 years than they would have if the law had not been changed.

We must remain vigilant to ensure that we do not single out our Federal employees for cuts to pay and benefits. We must not balance the budget on the backs of hard-working Americans, hard-working Americans who work for the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, all too often some paint a picture of our public servants as incompetent, uncaring paper pushers. At times we even vilify our hard-working Government employees, sometimes with tragic results.

Mr. Speaker, last month we paid tribute to the men and women who lost their lives in the tragic Oklahoma City bombing. The majority of these people, the overwhelming majority were hard-working Federal employees. They were not nameless, faceless, presumably defenseless bureaucrats, as some would say.

Let me be perfectly clear and to the point. I get angry, and I hope many Members in this House do, over those who would denigrate our civil servants. All too often it is the prevailing habit of this body to attack the character and devotion of our Federal employees, even our own.

Mr. Speaker, we must stop the senseless scapegoating and needless bashing of our civil servants. Federal employees play an integral, albeit often invisible, role in our daily lives. Federal employees make sure that our senior citizens get their monthly Social Security checks and that our veterans get the care and treatment they need. Federal employees are responsible for printing our money and even insuring it when it makes deposits at the bank.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this time to stand and say that we appreciate the efforts of those who work for our Federal Government, including most specifically those who work for this House of Representatives.

## DISASTER ASSISTANCE NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] is recognized for 5 minutes.